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 **Latest release**

Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia methodology

Reference period 2020-21 financial year

Released 29/08/2023

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Introduction

The two-yearly Retirement and Retirement Intentions (RaRI) survey was first conducted in 2004-05, as part of the Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS). Similar data on retirement and retirement intentions were previously collected on an irregular basis between 1980 and 1997 in surveys conducted as supplementary to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and also in the 2007 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation (SEARS).

Data are used to examine changes in retirement trends over time, factors which influence retirement, and the income arrangements made by retirees and potential retirees for their retirement.

Additional information about survey design, scope, coverage and population benchmarks relevant to the monthly LFS, which also applies to supplementary surveys, can be found in [Labour Force, Australia, Methodology \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2022\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2022).

Descriptions of the underlying concepts and structure of Australia's labour force statistics, and the sources and methods used in compiling the estimates, are presented in [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release).

Scope and coverage

The scope of the LFS is the civilian population aged 15 years and over, excluding:

- Members of the permanent defence forces
- Certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments
- Overseas residents in Australia
- Members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

The following additional exclusions apply to the MPHS:

- People aged 15-17 years. The MPHS is collected via personal interview and restricted to persons aged 18 years and over
- Very remote parts of Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- People living in non-private households such as hotels, university residences, students at boarding schools, patients in hospitals, inmates of prisons and residents of other institutions (e.g. retirement homes, homes for people with disabilities).

People aged under 45 years are also excluded as out of scope for the Retirement and Retirement Intentions survey.

In the LFS, coverage rules are applied, which aim to ensure that each person is associated with only one dwelling, and hence has only one chance of selection in the survey.

See [Labour Force, Australia, Methodology \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2022\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/feb-2022) for more details.

Collection Method

The Retirement and Retirement Intentions topic is collected within the Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS), a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Each month, a sample of households are selected for the MPHS from the responding

households who are in the last of their 8 months in the LFS. In these households, after the LFS had been fully completed for each person, a usual resident aged 18 years and over is selected at random to complete the questionnaire.

Data are collected via personal interviews by either telephone or in person at selected households.

For more details, see the MPHS chapter in [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release>).

Questionnaire

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[318.28 KB]

Sample Design

This survey is based on the new sample introduced into LFS in July 2018. The new sample design has adopted the use of the Address Register as the sampling frame for unit selection, and the sampling fractions for selection probabilities within each state have been updated to reflect the most recent population distribution based on results from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. As with each regular sample design, the impacts on the data are expected to be minimal. For more information, see the [Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design](/statistics/research/labour-force-survey-sample-design) (</statistics/research/labour-force-survey-sample-design>).

Sample Size

The sample is pooled from data collected each month across the whole financial year. The sample size of the 2020-21 B&I survey (after taking into account the scope, coverage and sub-sampling exclusions) was approximately 8,000.

Weighting and estimation

Population benchmarks

Survey weights are calibrated against population benchmarks to ensure that the survey estimates conform to the independently estimated distribution of the population, rather than the distribution within the sample itself.

When calibrating the weights, the survey sample is grouped into categories based on the following characteristics:

- State or territory
- Capital city or rest of state

- Sex
- Age
- Employed full-time, part-time, unemployed or not in the labour force.

The Labour Force Survey estimates are calculated in such a way as to sum to the independent estimates of the civilian population aged 15 years and over (population benchmarks). These population benchmarks are updated quarterly based on Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data. See [Labour Force, Australia, Methodology \(/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/jun-2021\)](#) for more information.

From August 2015, Labour Force estimates have been compiled using population benchmarks based on the most recently available release of ERP data, continually revised on a quarterly basis.

The RaRI benchmarks were based on a 12-month average of the LFS estimates for the June to July financial year, as reported in the April 2023 issue of [Labour Force, Australia \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/apr-2023\)](#). This approach is used to remove the seasonality from the employed, unemployed and not in the labour force benchmarks and to improve coherence between the two publications.

Estimates from previous surveys back to 2014-15 have also been revised using this method, with benchmarks based on the same population series (as at April 2023). These estimates were calibrated to population benchmarks based on revisions to ERP that incorporated the results of the 2021 Census (introduced to LFS in the November 2022 issue).

Comparability with LFS

Due to differences in the scope and sample size of this MPHS and that of the monthly LFS, the estimates procedure may lead to some small variations between labour force estimates from this survey and those from the LFS.

Survey Output

A number of spreadsheets are available from [Data downloads \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/retirement-and-retirement-intentions-australia/latest-release#data-downloads\)](#). They present tables of estimates and their corresponding relative standard errors (RSEs).

For users who wish to undertake more detailed analysis, the underlying microdata is available in [DataLab \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/datalab\)](#) and [TableBuilder \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder\)](#). For more details, refer to [Microdata and](#)

[TableBuilder: Retirement and Retirement Intentions \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/retirement-and-retirement-intentions\).](#)

Survey content

The survey is designed to provide a large range of statistics on retirees and retirement plans across the following conceptual groups:

- Geography
- Demographics
- Cultural diversity
- Families and children
- Education and qualifications
- Health and disability
- Unpaid work and care
- Participation and underemployment
- Characteristics of employment
- Characteristics of main job
- Characteristics of last job
- Wanting to work
- Looking for work
- Current income and housing
- Partner's participation and income
- Retirement status
- Income at retirement
- Current living costs in retirement
- Superannuation
- Factors influencing retirement decisions
- Retirement intentions
- Transition to retirement plans
- Expected income at retirement
- Returning to work after retirement

For more details, refer to the Data item list

Data item list

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[837.77 KB]

Accuracy and quality

Reliability of estimates

As the estimates are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of households, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from those

estimates that would have been produced if all households had been included in the survey or a different sample was selected. Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey - sampling error and non-sampling error.

- sampling error is the difference between the published estimate and the value that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey.
- non-sampling errors are inaccuracies that occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents and interviewers, and errors made in coding and processing data. These inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample. Every effort is made to reduce the non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and effective processing procedures.

Some of the estimates contained in the tables have a relative standard error (RSE) of 50 per cent or greater. These estimates are marked as unreliable for general use. Estimates with an RSE of between 25 and 50 per cent are also marked and should be used with caution.

More on reliability of estimates

Non-sampling error

Non-sampling error may occur in any collection, whether it is based on a sample or a full count such as a census. Sources of non-sampling error include non-response, errors in reporting by respondents or recording of answers by interviewers and errors in coding and processing data. Every effort is made to reduce non-sampling error by careful design and testing of questionnaires, training and supervision of interviewers, and extensive editing and quality control procedures at all stages of data processing.

Sampling error

Sampling error is the difference between the published estimates, derived from a sample of persons, and the value that would have been produced if the total population (as defined by the scope of the survey) had been included in the survey. One measure of the sampling error is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of persons was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all households had been surveyed, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs.

Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE), which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate.

$$RSE\% = \left(\frac{SE}{estimate} \right) \times 100$$

RSEs for estimates have been calculated using the Jackknife method of variance estimation.

This involves the calculation of 30 'replicate' estimates based on 30 different sub-samples of the obtained sample. The variability of estimates obtained from these subsamples is used to estimate the sample variability surrounding the main estimate. RSEs for median estimates have been calculated using the Woodruff method.

The Excel spreadsheets in the Data downloads section contain all the tables produced for this release and the calculated RSEs for each of the estimates.

Only estimates (numbers or percentages) with RSEs less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most analytical purposes. However, estimates with larger RSEs have been included. Estimates with an RSE in the range 25% to 50% should be used with caution while estimates with RSEs greater than 50% are considered too unreliable for general use. All cells in the Excel spreadsheets with RSEs greater than 25% contain a comment indicating the size of the RSE. These cells can be identified by a red indicator in the corner of the cell. The comment appears when the mouse pointer hovers over the cell.

Another measure is the Margin of Error (MOE), which shows the largest possible difference that could be between the estimate due to sampling error and what would have been produced had all persons been included in the survey with a given level of confidence. It is useful for understanding and comparing the accuracy of proportion estimates.

Where provided, MOEs for estimates are calculated at the 95% confidence level. At this level, there are 19 chances in 20 that the estimate will differ from the population value by less than the provided MOE. The 95% MOE is obtained by multiplying the SE by 1.96.

$$MOE = SE \times 1.96$$

Calculation of standard error

Standard errors can be calculated using the estimates (counts or percentages) and the corresponding RSEs. Since the RSE is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate, recalculating the standard error is obtained by multiplying the estimate by the RSE.

Proportions and percentages

Proportions and percentages formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSE of a proportion is given below. This formula is only valid when x is a subset of y

$$RSE(\frac{x}{y}) \approx \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

Differences

The difference between two survey estimates (counts or percentages) can also be calculated from published estimates. Such an estimate is also subject to sampling error. The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates ($x - y$) may be calculated by the following formula

$$SE(x - y) \approx \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics or sub populations, it provides a good approximation for the differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

Significance testing

A statistical significance test for a comparison between estimates can be performed to determine whether it is likely that there is a difference between the corresponding population characteristics. The SE of the difference between two corresponding estimates (x and y) can be calculated using the formula shown above in the Differences section. This SE is then used to calculate the following test statistic

$$\left(\frac{x - y}{SE(x - y)} \right)$$

If the value of this test statistic is greater than 1.96 then there is evidence, with a 95% level of confidence, of a statistically significant difference in the two populations with respect to that characteristic. Otherwise, it cannot be stated with confidence that there is a real difference between the populations with respect to that characteristic.

Rounding

As estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

Related publications

ABS publications which may be of interest include:

- [Retirement and Retirement Intentions \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6238.0&](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6238.0&)

[viewtitle=Retirement%20and%20Retirement%20Intentions,%20Australia~July%202016%20to%20June%202017~Previous~18/12/2017&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6238.0&issue=July%202016%20to%20June%202017&num=&view=&\)\(6238.0\), 1986 to 2020-21](#)

- [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Summary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6237.0Nov%201986?OpenDocument\)\(6237.0\), 1986](#)
- [Persons Who Had Re-Entered The Labour Force \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6264.0&viewtitle=Persons%20Who%20Had%20Re-entered%20The%20Labour%20Force,%20Australia~Jul%201995~Latest~01/02/1996&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6264.0&issue=Jul%201995&num=&view=&\)\(6264.0\), 1985 to 1995](#)
- [Persons Who Have Left The Labour Force \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6267.0&viewtitle=Persons%20Who%20Have%20Left%20The%20Labour%20Force,%20Australia~Sep%201994~Latest~02/04/1995&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6267.0&issue=Sep%201994&num=&view=&\)\(6267.0\), 1985 to 1994](#)
- [Persons Who Intended To Retire From Full-Time Work \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6258.0Sep%201984?OpenDocument\)\(6258.0\), 1984](#)
- [Persons Who Intended To Retire From Full-Time Work, Preliminary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6257.0Sep%201984?OpenDocument\)\(6257.0\), 1984](#)
- [Persons Retired From Full-time Work \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6238.0Sep%201983?OpenDocument\)\(6238.0\), 1983](#)
- [Persons Retired From Full-time Work, Preliminary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6237.0Sep%201983?OpenDocument\)\(6237.0\), 1983](#)
- [Persons Aged 50-69 Years Ceasing Full-time Work \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6238.0May%201980?OpenDocument\)\(6238.0\), 1980](#)
- [Persons Ceasing Full-Time Work, Preliminary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6237.0May%201980?OpenDocument\)\(6237.0\), 1980](#)
- [Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/6361.0Main%20Features2Apr%20to%20Jul%202007%20\(Re-issue\)?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6361.0&issue=Apr%20to%20Jul%202007%20\(Re-issue\)&num=&view=\)\(6361.0\), 2007](#)
 - [State Tables \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6361.0.55.003Apr%20to%20Jul%202007%20\(Re-issue\)?OpenDocument\)\(6361.0.55.003\),](#)
 - [Datacubes \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6361.0.55.004Apr%20to%20Jul%202007%20\(Re-issue\)?OpenDocument\)\(6361.0.55.004\)](#)
- [Employment Arrangements and Superannuation \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6361.0Main+Features1Jun%202000?OpenDocument\)\(6361.0\), 2000](#)
- [Superannuation: Coverage and Financial Characteristics \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6360.0Main+Features1Jun%202000?OpenDocument\)](#)

(6360.0), 2000

- [Superannuation \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6319.0&viewtitle=Superannuation,%20Australia~Nov%201995~Latest~30/05/1996&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6319.0&issue=Nov%201995&num=&view=&\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6319.0&viewtitle=Superannuation,%20Australia~Nov%201995~Latest~30/05/1996&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6319.0&issue=Nov%201995&num=&view=&) (6319.0), 1974 to 1995
- [Superannuation, Summary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6318.0&viewtitle=Superannuation,%20Australia,%20Summary~Nov%201988~Latest~20/01/1989&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6318.0&issue=Nov%201988&num=&view=&\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6318.0&viewtitle=Superannuation,%20Australia,%20Summary~Nov%201988~Latest~20/01/1989&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6318.0&issue=Nov%201988&num=&view=&) (6318.0), 1974 to 1988

Glossary

Show all

Born 1951 or earlier

People who were born in 1951 or earlier are eligible for the Australian age pension at 65 years

Born 1952 - 1956

People who were born from 1952 to 1956 are eligible for the Australian age pension at ages between 65 years and 66 years and 6 months.

Born 1957 or later

People who were born in 1957 or later are eligible for the Australian age pension at 67 years.

Employed persons

All people aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers), or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers), or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were
 - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement
 - on strike or locked out
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or

- were owner managers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

Employees

An employed person who does not operate their own incorporated or unincorporated enterprise. An employee works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, on a commission basis with a retainer, tips, piece-rates, or payment in kind.

Employees with paid leave entitlements

Employees who were entitled to either paid sick leave or paid holiday leave (or both).

Employees without paid leave entitlements

Employees who were not entitled to, or did not know whether they were entitled to, paid sick and paid holiday leave.

Full-time workers (usual)

Employed people who usually work 35 hours or more a week in all jobs.

Fully self-funded

Funded entirely from superannuation or any other income source, excluding any form of a government pension or allowance.

Government pension or allowance

Income support payments from government to people under social security and related government programs. Included are pensions and allowances received by aged, disabled, unemployed and sick people, families and children, veterans and their survivors, and study allowances for students. Payments made by overseas governments as well as the Australian government are included.

Had worked before

People who are not in the labour force or are unemployed and have previously worked. Only people who have previously worked before can be classified as retired.

Prior to 2014-15, it was required that people previously worked in a job for at least 2 weeks. The definition now only requires people to have previously worked in a job for any duration, including jobs that lasted for less than 2 weeks. This change is to remain consistent with changes that were introduced to the LFS questionnaire in July 2014 regarding duration of job search.

Had never worked before

People who are not in the labour force or are unemployed looking for work and have never worked before. Only people who have previously worked can be classified as Retired.

Industry

An industry is a group of businesses or organisations that undertake similar economic activities to produce goods or services. In this publication, industry refers to ANZSIC Division as classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\), 2006 \(Revision 2.0\) \(cat. no. 1292.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0>).

Intends to retire from the labour force

People who indicated that they intended to give up all labour force activity in the future, including both working and looking for work.

Labour force

The civilian population can be split into two mutually exclusive groups: the labour force (employed and unemployed people) and not in the labour force.

Last job

Refers to the last job worked within the last 20 years.

Left last job to retire

People who voluntarily left their last job to retire. Includes people who reached the retirement age, were eligible for superannuation or pension, or who retired from their own job to coincide with their partner's retirement.

Long-term health conditions

A person with a long-term health condition is anyone who reported one or more of the following conditions:

- Arthritis or osteoporosis
- Asthma
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Mental health condition
- Long-term injury
- Other long-term condition

Lost last job for economic reasons (retrenched)

People who involuntarily lost their last job due to reasons of retrenchment, redundancy, dismissal, or permanently stood down because no work was available. Also includes self-employed owner managers whose own business closed down for economic reasons.

Lost last job due to illness or injury

People who involuntarily lost their last job due to own illness or injury. Does not include people who left their last job to care for an ill, disabled or elderly person.

Lump sum payment

A single one-off payment from a superannuation (super) scheme, rather than a series of regular payments over time. Access to lump sum payments from superannuation schemes are generally limited to retirement or meeting a certain age criteria, but there are circumstances where super can be released early, such as severe financial hardship or compassionate grounds.

Main job

The job in which most hours were usually worked.

Never intends to retire from the labour force

People who indicated that they never intend to give up all labour force activity in the future.

Not employed

People who are either unemployed or not in the labour force.

Not retired from the labour force

People aged 45 years and over who have, at some time, worked and were not retired from the labour force. That is, either employed, unemployed or not in the labour force and intend to continue working or look for, or take up, work in the future.

Occupation

An occupation is a collection of jobs that are sufficiently similar in their title and tasks, skill level and skill specialisation which are grouped together for the purposes of classification. In this publication, occupation refers to Major Group and Sub-Major Group as defined by [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2013, Version 1.2 \(cat. no. 1220.0\).](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/4AF138F6DB4FFD4BCA2571E200096BAD?opendocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/4AF138F6DB4FFD4BCA2571E200096BAD?opendocument>)

Owner managers of incorporated enterprises (OMIEs)

People who work in their own incorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity which is

registered as a separate legal entity to its members or owners (also known as a limited liability company). These people are sometimes classified as employees. They can work alone or in a business with employees.

Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises (OMUEs)

People who operate their own unincorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity in which the owner and the business are legally inseparable, so that the owner is liable for any business debts that are incurred. Includes those engaged independently in a trade or profession. They can work alone or in a business with employees.

Partially self-funded

Funded by government pension or allowance and at least one other income source.

Part-time workers (usual)

Employed people who usually work less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs).

People in the labour force

People who were classified as being in the labour force, that is, either employed or unemployed.

People not in the labour force

People who were not classified as employed or unemployed.

Private health insurance

Includes hospital or extras cover only. People who reported ambulance cover only, or other health arrangements (eg Department of Veteran Affairs) are not considered to have private health insurance.

Relationship in household

The relationship of people who live in the same household.

Retired from the labour force

People who had previously worked and had retired from work or looking for work, and did not intend to look for, or take up, work in the future.

Since 2014-15, the definition of retirement no longer requires people to have previously worked in a job for at least 2 weeks. The definition now only requires people to have previously worked in a job for any duration, including jobs that lasted for less than 2 weeks. This change was done to remain consistent with changes that were made to the LFS

questionnaire in July 2014 regarding duration of job search.

Status of employment

Classifies employed persons according to the following categories on the basis of their current job:

- Employees
 - with paid leave entitlements
 - without paid leave entitlements
- Owner managers with employees (employer)
 - Owner manager of incorporated enterprise with employees
 - Owner manager of unincorporated enterprise with employees
- Owner managers without employees (own account worker)
 - Owner manager of incorporated enterprise without employees
 - Owner manager of unincorporated enterprise without employees
- Contributing family workers.

Superannuation scheme (super)

Any fund, association or organisation set up for the purpose of providing financial cover for members when they retire from work. For this survey, information about superannuation scheme membership was collected if the respondent indicated that contributions had been made to a scheme. Contributions could either have been made by the respondent, the respondent's partner or the respondent's employer.

Unemployed

People who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and;
- were available for work in the reference week; or
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

Unable to work

People who responded (or whose response had been recorded by proxy from the responsible adult responding on behalf of the household) that they were "permanently unable to work" when answering the LFS question "Did you do any work at all in a job, business or farm (last week)?"

Since 1994, people who had been classified as "permanently unable to work" from the LFS

questionnaire are not excluded from the Retirement and Retirement Intentions survey.

Usual number of hours

Usual hours of work refers to a typical period rather than the hours worked in a specified reference period. The concept of usual hours applies both to people at work and to people temporarily absent from work, and is defined as the hours worked during a typical week or day. Actual hours worked (for a specific reference period) may differ from usual hours worked due to illness, vacation, strike, overtime work, a change of job, or similar reasons. It is possible for a person to usually not work any hours in a typical week (usually work 0 hours) but be classified as employed based on the hours worked during the specific reference period.

History of changes

2020-21

- The Excel spreadsheets in Data downloads have been redesigned to incorporate time series data back to 2014-15, with optional state and territory and populations of interest breakdowns.
 - Estimates were rebenchmarked to a 12-month average of population estimates from the Labour Force Survey (as at Apr 2023).
 - Microdata has been released in DataLab for the first time, refer to [Microdata and TableBuilder: Retirement and Retirement Intentions \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/retirement-and-retirement-intentions\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/retirement-and-retirement-intentions) for more information.
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Show all

2018-19

- Estimates were benchmarked to a 12 month average of population estimates from the Labour Force Survey (as at December 2019). Estimates from previous surveys were also re-benchmarked using 12 month averages from the same LFS population series (as at December 2019) to improve coherence and consistency in the timeseries. The revised timeseries is available in Table 2 of this publications Data downloads section.
- The format of Table 2 has been modified to accommodate extending the series back to the November 1997 survey (which has also been rebenchmarked).
- The definition of retirement no longer requires people to have previously worked in a job for at least 2 weeks. The definition now only requires people to have previously worked in a job for any duration, including jobs that lasted for less than 2 weeks. This change was done to remain consistent with changes that were made to the LFS questionnaire in July 2014 regarding duration of job search.

2016-17

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202016%20to%20June%202017) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202016%20to%20June%202017) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- The reference period for benchmarks changed from March to December, which resulted in a minor impact on the comparison of level estimates between 2014-15 and 2016-17. This impact has since been removed in 2018-19, when both surveys were rebenchmarked to a 12 month average of the reference period instead of a single point in time.
- Enhancements were made to the previous job module, and new questions added on whether business owners have employees, and on housing tenure.
- Data now also released in TableBuilder.

2014-15

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202014%20to%20June%202015) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202014%20to%20June%202015) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Questions on housing tenure, previous full-time job details and main source of current personal income were not collected.
- Addition of further age ranges ('65-69', '70-74', '75-79' and '80 and over') for questions on transitioning to retirement.
- To improve coherence with LFS estimates, survey benchmarking changed to include employed, unemployed and not in the labour force populations from the LFS alongside independent total population estimates from the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). Previously, benchmarks were based only on ERP. The reference period for the benchmarks were based on a single point in time (March 2015)

2012-13

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202012%20to%20June%202013) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202012%20to%20June%202013) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- New content added on satisfaction with current hours and current work arrangements, self-funded retirement, and transition to retirement plans.
- Additional content included for 2012-13 on self-assessed health status, private health insurance and housing tenure.
- Microdata not released.

2010-11

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202010%20to%20June%202011) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1July%202010%20to%20June%202011) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Questions on intentions for a healthy/active retirement, housing tenure, private health insurance, and self-assessed health not included.

2008-09

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Jul%202008%20to%20Jun%202009) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Jul%202008%20to%20Jun%202009) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- In cases where people could not report an exact age they 'intend to permanently give up work', they were given the option of responding with an age range. These range responses were included in 'average age intends to retire' by substituting the low-point of the range into the calculation.
- New content added, including transition to retirement plans, sources of funds for meeting living costs, intentions for a healthy/active retirement, housing tenure, and self-assessed health.
- Additional content included for 2008-09 on self-assessed health status, private health insurance and housing tenure.
- Inclusion of 'all/main sources of funds for meeting living costs' data items.

April-July 2007

- Superannuation and Retirement data published in [Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6361.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6361.0) (cat. no. 6361.0).
- Some retirement data only available for people who had retired in the last 20 years.

2006-07

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Jul%202006%20to%20Jun%202007) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Jul%202006%20to%20Jun%202007) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Collected from the Multi-Purpose Household survey (MPHS) for the full financial year.
- Age intends to retire 'don't know' category replaced with 'don't know age will retire' and 'don't know whether will retire'. People who don't know age will retire were included with the 'intends to retire' population, whereas people who reported 'did not know whether will retire' were excluded from this population. This change had the effect of slightly decreasing the number of people who intend to retire.
- An additional category of 'partner's income' was included in the following data items: 'all/main source of income at retirement', and 'all/main expected source of income at retirement' (in 2004-05 this was included in the 'other' or 'no income' category).

2004-05

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Aug%202004%20to%20Jun%202005) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Aug%202004%20to%20Jun%202005) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Collected from the Multi-Purpose Household survey (MPHS) for August 2004 to June 2005.
- Retirement data expanded to include retirement from all kinds of work (full-time and part-time).

April-June 2000

- Superannuation data published in [Employment Arrangements and Superannuation, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6361.0Main+Features1Jun%202000?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6361.0Main+Features1Jun%202000?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6361.0).
- Some limited retirement data for people aged under 70 years available.

November 1997

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201997\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201997) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Collected from 6/8th of the Labour Force Survey.
- Retirement data expanded to include retirement from part-time work (excluding any part-time work of less than 10 hours per week).

November 1995

- Superannuation data collected in [Superannuation, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6319.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6319.0) (cat. no. 6319.0).
- Some limited retirement data for people aged under 75 years available.

November 1994

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201994\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201994) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Collected from 7/8th of the Labour Force Survey, previously collected from the whole sample.
- Includes people permanently unable to work. These people could be classed as retired if they had previously worked full-time at some point (before becoming permanently unable to work).

November 1993

- Superannuation data published in [Superannuation, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Nov%201993\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Nov%201993) (cat. no. 6319.0).
- No retirement data available.

October 1992

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Oct%201992\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Oct%201992) (cat. no. 6238.0).

November 1991

- Superannuation data published in [Superannuation, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Nov%201991?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Nov%201991?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6319.0).
- No retirement data available.

November 1989

- Published in [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201989) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201989) (cat. no. 6238.0).

November 1988

- Superannuation data published in [Superannuation, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Nov%201988) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Nov%201988) (cat. no. 6319.0).
- No retirement data available.

November 1986

- Published as [Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201986) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Nov%201986) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Housing arrangements data was expanded to include all people in sample. Previously, this information was collected once per household.

September 1984

- Retirement intentions data published in [Persons Who Intended to Retire from Full-time Work, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6258.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6258.0) (cat. no. 6258.0).
- Detailed Retirement data not available.

September 1983

- Published as [Persons Retired from Full-time Work, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Sep%201983) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1Sep%201983) (cat. no. 6238.0)
- Scope expanded to people aged 45 years and over.
- Retirement data expanded to include people who had retired more than 20 years ago.
- Retirement intentions data not collected.

September-November 1982

- Superannuation data published in [Superannuation, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Sep%20to%20Nov%201982) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Sep%20to%20Nov%201982) (cat. no. 6319.0).
- No retirement data available.

May 1980

- First retirement survey, published as [Persons Aged 50-69 Years Ceasing Full-Time Work, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1May%201980) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6238.0Main+Features1May%201980) (cat. no. 6238.0).
- Retirement measured as retirement from full-time work.
- Scope originally limited to people aged 50 to 69 years.
- Age at retirement and other data items only asked when people had retired in the last 20 years.
- Excluded people permanently unable to work.

Feb 1974

- First superannuation survey, published as [Survey of Superannuation](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Feb%201974) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6319.0Main+Features1Feb%201974>) (cat. no. 6319.0).
- No retirement data available.